

# **ANIMAL ACTION PLAN FOR CHANGE**

- ❖ **FULLY ASSESS SITUATION** (Before jumping on the social media bandwagon)
  - Ask Questions
  - Document with pictures
  - See the situation for yourself
  
- ❖ **BUILD A TIMELINE**
  - Timelines are important because as you develop it you start to learn and find new things. To create a timeline, google the shelter and find articles talking about outbreaks, shelter issues, and management changes. Many cities have an Animal Advisory Board or Committee, and you can go to the city website and under meetings and pull up the minutes from those meetings and learn many important details for your timeline. Lastly take info from your PIR's and put those details into your timeline. This helps you get a full picture.
  
- ❖ **FILE A PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUEST**
  - **What is Public Information and does every state have an open records law?** All 50 states and the District of Columbia have public information laws that govern how the public can access government records. These laws are also known as Sunshine Laws, Open Records Laws, or Public Records Laws.
    - Each state's public records laws differ in several ways, including response times for requests, which government branches are included, exemptions for specific requests, reporting laws, fees, waivers, and penalties for non-compliance
    - [Click Here](#) to find out Public Information called in my state.
  - **Are any records considered exempt?** Yes, some records are exempt from public access, including information related to physical or digital security, sensitive personal information, and records that are restricted by federal law.
  - **What if the request is at the Federal Level (ie. USDA)?** The federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) applies to records created by federal agencies, but not to records held by state and local governments.

- **What department usually handles these requests at the local level?**
  - Generally, requests can be made online via the City Secretary's office, and most counties have a District Clerk. Call their office first and ask them to direct you how to file for public records.
- **Is there specific wording or way I should request information when filing for public records?** Yes, make your requests as specific as possible and consider the following type of requests:
  - General Request: Ask for all documents, video and audio recordings, photos and reports related to a specific animal or cruelty case.
  - HR File: Any and all records related in the HR File for (name of person).
  - Public Officials Emails/Texts/Messages: Use Keywords such as the name of representative(s), date ranges, related issue. For example, I would like any and all communications that include emails or text messages between Person A and Person B related to the animal shelter/services department for the time period of 1/1/2020 to Present. Another example, I would like any and all emails between city officials including the city council, city managers office and leadership of PD or Animal Services related to (state specific issue such as cruelty case, standards for animal care, a specific animal / animal id)
  - Statistical Reports: I would like a copy of the annual disposition statistical reports that include the Live Release Rate, Intake, Adoptions, Redemptions, Rescue, Wildlife Rescue, TNR, etc.) for the last five years.
  - Standard Operating Procedures: I would like any and all SOP's developed for Animal Services from 2015 to Present.
  - Animal Detail Sheet (for specific animal): I am requesting any and all documents or emails related to Animal Name / Animal ID from the (Intake Date) to Present. Examples include all intake records, disposition records, medical records, camera footage, emails and any records kept in your shelter management software programs.
  - Investigations or Audits: I am requesting a copy of any and all investigations, audits, or reviews of the Animal Services for the last 10 years.
  - Strays: Request body camera footage if an ACO picked up the animal

## ❖ FORM A LOCAL ANIMAL ADVOCATES GROUP

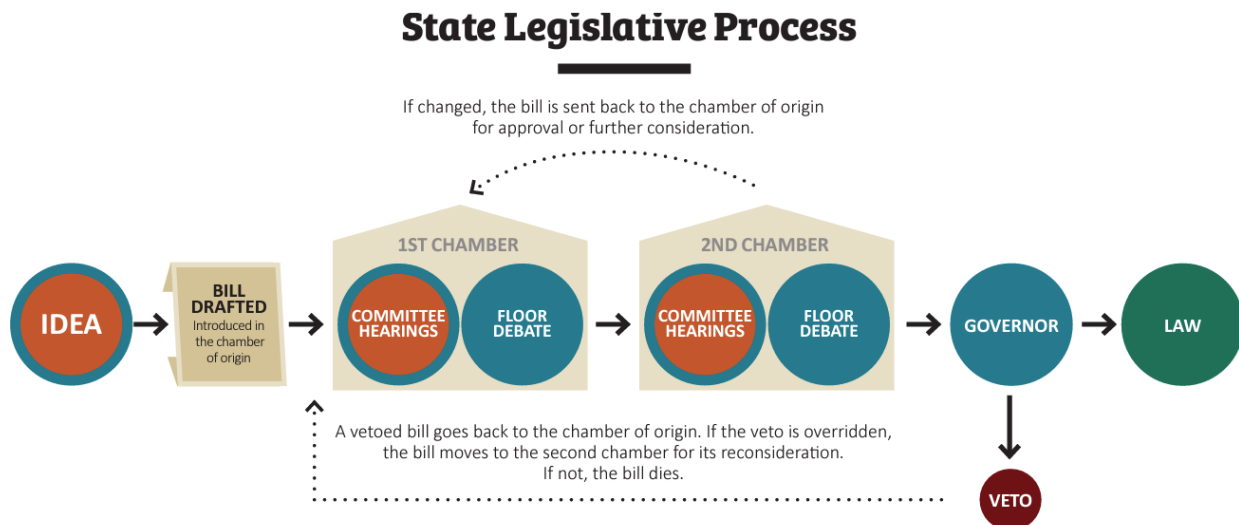
- As a member of your community, you have the power to create positive change for pets by using your voice, your vote and your signature. Engage others locally who have the same concern for the issue because there is power in numbers.
  - Create A Name: Keep it simple! For example, Bastrop Animal Advocates 4 Change, The Colony Animal Advocates, Lincoln Township Animal Advocates for Change and Frisco's Pet Project.
    - **The name should include your city, township or county name for search purposes. It is best to use keywords like "Animal Advocates" and words of action, such as "Change or Project".**
  - Create Social Media: Facebook Page / Group, TikTok Page and name it after your group name.
  - Create a website. [Frisco's Pet Project](#) is one example of an advocacy group that has good social media and website presence.
  - Keep a database of those who want to be involved and make sure you have their name, phone and email.

## ❖ DEVELOP YOUR GROUPS CALL TO ACTION / PURPOSE

- Before reaching out to leadership you need to identify the problems, what your call to action will be, your purpose and possible solutions.
- What are some common solutions to typical problems?
  - Funding: Need for larger animal shelter (talk about the growth of your area). Find out how other shelters near you in cities of the same size have paid for their new buildings to show them the actual costs of what that change could cost.
  - Volunteer Group: to help with basic duties at the shelter such as cleaning, dog walking clubs, who can fundraise to help offset some of the city's cost, who can help the city apply for grants to fund low-cost clinics such as microchips or spay & neuter, and to promote adoptions and rescues online via social media platform.
    - For example, the group I work with runs the social media for the shelter and we on all platforms. We advocate for change at the state level with our representatives. We work in 100% partnership with the city to be allies instead of instigators. We have a specific group of off book volunteers to be the bull dogs or instigators when we need something.

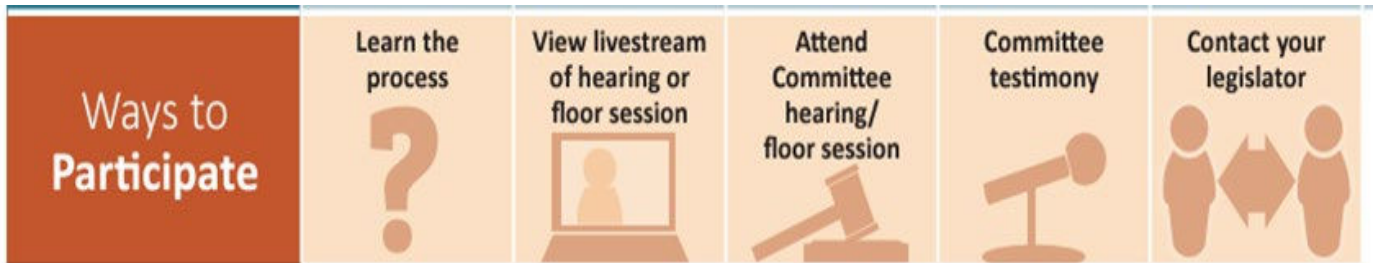
## ❖ REACH OUT TO LOCAL CITY LEADERS, COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES AND STATE REPRESENTATIVES

- Find Your Representatives: [Click Here](#) or visit <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>
- Ways To Communicate: Letters, Emails, Phone Calls, Tags on Social Media Posts, Request Face-To-Face meetings, Attend Town Hall Meetings, Attend Council Meetings and County Commissioner Meetings (request to speak during public input)
- Local Leaders: If you are in a city start with your city council. Go to the city website and look them up. Email them and introduce your group! Tell them who you are and what you are advocating for! THEN ASK FOR AN APPOINTMENT TO MEET WITH THEM!
- County Leaders: Reach out to county leaders like the county commissioners! Every city is also in a county and county leaders have strong relationships with local municipalities.
  - What do County Commissioners do? County commissioners are elected officials who oversee the administration and operation of a county. They are responsible for a wide range of duties, including policymaking, building and maintaining county infrastructure, setting taxes, manage the county budget, appoint officials to non-elected positions, and conduct elections.
- State Leaders: Find your State Representative and your State Senator
  - What do State Reps and State Senators do? Senators represent their entire states, but members of the House represent individual districts.



The number of districts in each state is determined by a state's population.

- What ways can I get involved with my State Legislators to affect the legislative process? Learn the legislative process. This is the most important part in the animal welfare fight we have! Working at the state level to effectively create change.
- Look up your state's laws on Animal Welfare: For example, Texas [click here](#)



Groups To Follow:

Animal Defense League

In Texas, Texas Humane Legislative Networks (THLN)

[Work To Change Local Ordinances](#)

HumanePro: [How To: Create Animal Friendly Communities](#)